13: Sarytschew--46 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 333, 501

"Here we found some River-Tungusians, so called from their having no reindeer, and paddling incessantly about the river in their birch canoes, which serve at the same time for their habitations. These canoes are very small, and much in use among the Jakuts, in lakes and rivers. They are composed of twigs, plaited round long poles, which answer the purpose of ribs, and are altogether covered with the bark of the birch tree. The cavities are filled up with a sort of cement, which the Jakuts extract from boiled cream."

/163 cont./

122 In particular he urged haste, for with the disappearance of the sun at the /164/ beginning of November the most frightful snowstorms customarily set in, which are very dangerous, especially on the tundra.

Unfortunately we did not have much time to converse with him, because night had already fallen and we still had a good stretch to cover to the balagan of the elder. Sachár O'ssipowitsch made us a gift of some fresh white and rye bread and a magnificent fish (néljma), a delicacy missing for a long time; we then left him, after he had most cordially invited us to stay at his house in Ssiktjách upon our return trip, even in his absence.

In the balagan of the elder we were greeted by his wife and given the best places, next to the fire, and the elder could not be talked out of showing us and our men hospitality with fat reindeer meat and frozen milk. The people here obviously had a better way of life than our Tungus friends along the Tunguska, who were certainly not poor.

342 For the first time we found ourselves in a Jakut /Yakut/ balagan and had to admit that in severe cold it was much to be [333] preferred to our light tschum /choom/. Such a balagan, or [335] yurt, also called stan when it is used as a station at the same time, and powárnja, that is, kitchen, by some travelers, is a rectangular hut with garret-shaped, sloping side-walls and a flat roof, made out of tree trunks, which are plastered with clay on the outside and are thickly covered with snow in the winter. Any cracks are carefully plugged up with moss from the inside. [354] The windows consist of thick sheets of ice; in the middle [352] stands a Jakut fireplace (kamelók), likewise made out of clay-plastered logs and around this are a number of sleeping places, that is, simple wooden chests without bottoms, which are filled with stamped-down earth /165/ and therefore provide neither a soft bed nor, since they extend directly to the outer [362] wall, a warm one; there are usually six of them. To be sure, [122] such a balagan still leaves much to be desired; in particular the fireplace usually stands too far from the sleeping places and during the night frightful cold comes in through the wide,